

Remarks at a Reception for Senator Barbara Boxer in Los Angeles, California
April 19, 2010

The President. Hello, hello. Good to see you. We've got a whole bunch of the congressional delegation—[*applause*—you know who you are. [*Laughter*] I see a whole bunch of supporters from way back. It's good to see you again. It is just wonderful to be back in California. And I can't think of a better reason to come back to California than to get Barbara Boxer reelected.

Barbara was taking us down memory lane there for a second. [*Laughter*] So I won't go into every detail about what Barbara and I, together, and every Member of Congress here together has had to deal with over the last year and a half. Barbara mentioned two wars, the worst financial crisis since the Great Depression, a housing market that had completely collapsed. I forgot about the pirates, but you—[*laughter*—you forgot about the pandemic. [*Laughter*] That was kind of—that was like seventh or eighth on the list. [*Laughter*]

But look, the fact is, is that as tough as the situation has been in Washington, It's been a lot tougher on the ground for American people all across this country. You know about it because you've been dealing with it. In your capacity as community leaders, as elected leaders, you've seen what's happening here in California. And California, in a lot of ways, has been ground zero for what's been happening all across the country: millions of people thrown out of work; millions of people losing their health care in the process of being thrown out of work; choices having to be made by local and State officials about are they going to hang on to teachers, are they going to lay off teachers, how are they going to pay off a burgeoning debt, how are we going to deal with the social services that are needed more than ever because of the crisis, but unfortunately, we've got less revenue to deal with.

So there have been a lot of people hurting out there. And I know that. I get 10 letters every single day that I read out of the 40,000 that I receive, and about half of them call me an idiot—because the charge of those selecting the letters is to make sure that we're evenhanded. [*Laughter*] But the other half—actually, the other three-quarters—tell again and again just heartbreaking stories about children asking why is it that they're having to move even though they really like the house they're living in and the neighborhood they live in; or families talking about how are they going to take care of their parents now that their retirement accounts were completely decimated, or how are they going to make their mortgage when both adults in the household have lost their jobs.

And nothing is harder and nothing is more heartbreaking than reading these letters and knowing that change has not come as fast as we'd like. But here is the main message that I have for all of you: Change is coming. Change has come. An economy that was contracting is now expanding. Folks who were losing their jobs, now we're seeing employers hiring again. Businesses are beginning to invest again. Tax revenue is starting to percolate up again.

And the reason is, is because we made a series of decisions that were not always popular but were the right thing to do. And nobody is tougher and nobody is more determined to do the right thing, even when in the face of fierce opposition, than Barbara Boxer.

You all know that Barbara is a huge champion for clean energy; she is a huge champion for the environment. She is a huge champion of hybrid cars and electric plug-ins. So it's

appropriate that we have here this subcompact model—[*laughter*]*—that is an inexhaustible source of energy. And I could not have a better partner in the fights that have to be fought.*

Now, we've made all this progress because of people like Barbara Boxer and the Members of Congress who are here today. And if you just tick off what has been accomplished this year in yanking this economic out of depression and getting it on a trajectory again, on having about as ambitious a education reform agenda that not many people talk about, but millions more young people are going to be able to afford to go to college—[*applause*]. We've cracked down on housing fraud; we've cracked down on credit card fraud. We are moving through the stimulus package——

[At this point, Sen. Boxer's grandchild came onto the stage.]

Are you stealing my lines here? Come on. [*Laughter*] Talk about—wasn't it W.C. Fields who said, you never perform with kids or animals? [*Laughter*] Because they always, like, steal your thunder. [*Laughter*]

On clean energy, on investments in science, on reversing the stem cell ban. We're now moving forward and reversing "don't ask, don't tell." On health care reform so that every single—[*applause*]*—on each and every one of those issues, Barbara Boxer has been right in—[applause].*

But here is my message: We've got a lot more work to do. Our work is not yet done. And because some of the things that we did were not popular, we're going to have a tough political fight coming up. November is going to be tough. Barbara is going to have a tough race. It's always a tough race if you're an incumbent in this kind of economic environment. Even though it's picking up, people are still hurting like they haven't hurt in a long time. And so it's tough being an incumbent. And it's even tougher when you've got the other side of the aisle—which helped to cause the mess but doesn't seem to want to help in cleaning up after the mess—distorting the record of somebody like Barbara Boxer.

So we're going to have some work ahead of us. But when you're asked by your friends, your neighbors, people who you're making sure contribute to Barbara Boxer's campaign, I just want you to remind them what Barbara has been for and what the other side has been for. If they want to talk about the stimulus, you just remind them that one-third of that is tax cuts. We have 25 different tax cuts, and 98 percent of Californians got a tax cut because of the vote that Barbara Boxer cast, the biggest tax cut in history, biggest investment in clean energy in history, biggest investment in education in history. When they were against it, Barbara Boxer was for it.

You ask them, are you in favor of children with preexisting conditions not being able to get insurance and parents having to figure out how to scramble to find the care that their children need? Because they were against health care reform; Barbara Boxer was for health care reform. You ask them if they want to give away those millions of dollars worth of tax credits to small businesses so they can do the right thing by their employees. Barbara Boxer was for it; they are against it.

We're going to have some more choices coming up, because right now we've got a big battle on financial regulatory reform. And I don't know about you, the notion that we would settle for the status quo and create a situation in which Wall Street could gamble with somebody else's money, take exorbitant risks, and put the entire economy at risk, and force taxpayers to try to pick up the tab when things went south on them makes absolutely no sense, which is why Barbara Boxer and the present congressional delegation right here want to do

something about it and have tough restrictions on the kinds of risks that—[*applause*]—and where the consumers can be protected.

And I think that that's something that is worthy of support. Now, it turns out Mitch McConnell thinks differently. [*Laughter*] I don't know exactly what happened, but he and the chairman of the Senate committee went up to Wall Street, had a powwow with them, and came away; the next thing we knew, they were all opposed to financial regulatory reform. [*Laughter*] I don't know the nature of the conversation—[*laughter*]—but I'm hoping that they will do the right thing.

I don't welcome some of the pitched, partisan rhetoric that we've been seeing. Barbara doesn't either. None of us do. Because the problems we face are big enough that we've got to have Republicans and Democrats working together. But here's what I won't do, what I'm not going to do, and what Barbara Boxer is not going to do, is compromise our principles and sell out the American people just in order to try to create some false sense of peace. There are some stands that are worth fighting for, and financial regulatory reform is one of those stands.

Here is my bottom line. We've got a lot of work to do on a whole range of issues. We still need comprehensive immigration reform. We still need to make sure our K through 12 education is serving our children. We still have to make our economy more competitive and spur on greater innovation and investment in research and development. We've still got to have some control over our fiscal system. And you are going to need somebody who is as passionate and as caring and as committed and as tough as the Senator that you've got right here, right now.

So I don't want anybody here taking this for granted. A lot of you worked on my campaign in 2008, and sometimes it's easy to get excited about Presidential campaigns. But you know what? This is where the rubber hits the road. And unless Barbara gets the help that she needs from all of you—and that means digging deep and reaching out to your friends and your neighbors and carrying that message forward everywhere you go—unless she's got our support, she might not win this thing. And I don't think that's an acceptable outcome.

All right? So I want everybody to work hard, make phone calls, knock on doors, talk to your friends, talk to your neighbors, write big checks——

Audience member. Fired up! Ready to go!

The President. ——be fired up, and be ready to go, because Barbara Boxer is ready to go. And you are not going to have a better Senator than Barbara Boxer.

Thank you very much, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:30 p.m. at the California Science Center. In his remarks, he referred to Sen. John Cornyn, in his capacity as chairman of the National Republican Senatorial Committee. The transcript was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on April 20. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Categories: Addresses and Remarks : Senator Barbara Boxer, reception in Los Angeles, CA.

Locations: Los Angeles, CA.

Names: Boxer, Barbara; Cornyn, John; McConnell, Addison M. "Mitch".

Subjects: Afghanistan : U.S. military forces :: Deployment; Armed Forces, U.S. : "Don't ask, don't tell" policy, proposed repeal; Budget, Federal : Deficit; Business and industry : Credit

Card Accountability Responsibility and Disclosure Act of 2009; Business and industry : Small and minority businesses; California : Democratic Party events; California : President's visit; California : Recession, effects; Congress : Bipartisanship; Congress : Senate :: Minority leader; Diseases : Global influenza outbreak; Economy, national : American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009; Economy, national : Financial regulations, modernization efforts; Economy, national : Improvement ; Economy, national : Recession, effects; Economy, national : Strengthening efforts; Education : Postsecondary education :: Affordability; Education : Standards and school accountability; Education : Teachers; Education, Department of : Funding; Employment and unemployment : Job creation and growth; Employment and unemployment : Job losses; Energy : Alternative and renewable sources and technologies; Health and medical care : Cost control reforms; Health and medical care : Employer-based health insurance coverage; Health and medical care : Insurance coverage and access to providers; Health and medical care : Small businesses, tax credits to purchase insurance coverage; Health Care and Education Reconciliation Act of 2010; Housing : Fraud Enforcement and Recovery Act of 2009; Housing : Housing market :: Decline; Immigration and naturalization : Reform; Iraq : U.S. military forces :: Deployment; Science and technology : Research and development; Science and technology : Stem cell research; Social Security and retirement : Retirement accounts :: 401(k), 403(b), and IRA accounts; Somalia : Commercial vessel hostage, rescue; Taxation : Tax relief.

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